

**Proposition: THEA 325 should not be substituted for COMS 211.**

The Department of Communication believes THEA 325 should not be substituted for COMS 211 for many reasons, including the following:

1. COMS 211 focuses on theory and how to apply it to public speaking situations in order to be an effective communicator. Theater focuses on performance and may teach theory related to theater, but it does not teach rhetorical theory or how to apply it.
2. The argument from theater appears primarily to be that their students give speeches and should therefore be exempt from COMS 211. However, making a presentation (or presentations) in a course (or courses) should not be enough to substitute from COMS 211. Students give speeches in many departments throughout the University. However, the ACU Faculty decided public speaking is such an important skill, fundamental to academic and future life success, that it should be part of the core curriculum. COMS 211 was designed by three professors with doctorates in communication and is taught by professors and instructors of communication. Keeping the public speaking requirement in the Department of Communication ensures the quality of public speaking instruction. While we integrate faith through scripture into our courses and have discussions about faith, ethics, and communication, we would not argue that one of our courses should substitute for a Bible course taught by Bible instructors. Similarly, we believe a course (or courses) taught by theater instructors should not be substituted for a communication course taught by communication instructors.
3. COMS 211 is a completely different course from COMS 111. Just because theater substituted a course for COMS 111, doesn't mean the same substitution should be made for COMS 211. COMS 211 focuses on the application of rhetorical theory to the public speaking context. In fact, we believe COMS 211 is different enough from other public speaking courses in the way it has been designed that we are not accepting course transfers from other universities. If we aren't accepting transfers of other public speaking courses, then we should not accept this course substitution.
4. If any major were to exempt itself from the COMS 211 requirement, it should be the Department of Communication. Our majors are required to take two additional public speaking courses with greater rigor than that of COMS 211. However, we believe our course is foundational to our other public speaking courses and should therefore be required of even our majors.
5. Theater shares some similarities with communication. However, they are quite different disciplines. This is evidenced by the fact that theater and communication are in completely different departments. Additionally, they do not share any courses in their major cores. To say that making presentations in theater is similar to content taught in COMS 211 is like saying students in the Department of Communication should be exempt from ENGL 111 or 112 because they write papers in our courses. However, we would not make that argument because we believe instructors in the Department of English have special training and knowledge in order to teach the art of writing and composition to our students.

6. There are major differences between acting and public speaking. A few of these differences include a) playing a character (acting) vs. being yourself (speaking), b) memorized delivery style (acting) vs. extemporaneous delivery style (speaking), and c) interacting with other characters (acting) vs. interacting with an audience (speaking). The differences noted here are not comprehensive and do not include differences related to theory.
7. According to Phyllis Bolin, COMS 211 is an important part of the QEP. In a recent email, she noted:

COMS 211 ties into the *Create* goal associated with Student Learning Outcomes 2 [of the QEP]. In Student Learning Outcome 2.1, students will demonstrate effective use of information skills through written communication, apply information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance, and demonstrate critical thinking as they develop, produce, and evaluate a product or performance. COMS 211 provides opportunities for students to develop their public speaking knowledge, skills and attitudes through the integration of rhetorical theory, practice, and analysis. Students learn to effectively conduct scholarly research for the rhetorical situation. COMS 211 bridges the gap between the foundation for student research, scholarship, and creative work laid in the core curriculum to courses found in a student's major discipline (personal communication). As such, we believe COMS 211 will enhance theater students' public speaking abilities in their theater courses.

In summary, these are a few of the reasons the Department of Communication believes THEA 325 should not be substituted for COMS 211. We look forward to discussing these and other reasons with the Committee.